

International Missionary Council
419 Fourth Avenue, New York City
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For immediate release
July 7, 1932

THE MISSION OF CHRISTIANITY IN A WORLD CRISIS

From Jerusalem to Herrnhut - and Beyond

(A statement regarding the meeting of the International Missionary Council
in Herrnhut, Germany, June 23 - July 3, 1932)

The great German omnibus drew up in the beautiful little square called Zinzendorf-Platz in the tiny town of Herrnhut, after seventy miles drive southward from Dresden through the rolling corn-fields and forests of Saxony. We were within sight of the mountains of Czecho-Slovakia, at the center of a Europe that is passing through one of the major changes of history. As the men and women stepped out from the omnibus, the hospitable and kindly eyes of our Moravian hosts and hostesses looked into the faces of men and women, Indian and Korean, Japanese, Belgian and American, Filipino and French, leaders of the Christian forces of every country in Scandinavia from England to Denmark, Dutch and Scottish, Canadian and Afrikander, Mexican and English. They came also from the banks of the Nile, the Congo and the Yangtse rivers. These men and women had come across oceans and continents, drawn from absorbing tasks at great cost of time to this little tranquil town of 1,600 inhabitants, hidden among quiet hills, remote from the roar of cities and the turmoil of industries.

What had drawn them so far to come together in one place and why had they come to Herrnhut? They are mostly members of the International Missionary Council. Many of them represent directly the more than thirty National Christian Councils which now unite the Protestant Christian forces in most of the lands of Asia and Northern Europe, as well as of Africa, North and South America, and Australasia. They have come together for corporate fellowship in thought, prayer and planning for the advancement of the Kingdom of God throughout the world.

Under the chairmanship of Dr. John R. Mott, and with the secretarial leadership of Dr. J. H. Oldham, the Rev. William Paton and Dr. A. L. Warnshuis, in fellowship with the lay and clerical leadership of these widely scattered missionary forces, the Council has grown in strength. In 1928, it will be remembered, on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem, this Council in a marvellous fellowship of thought and prayer, caught and expressed a fresh vision of the world mission of Christianity for the present age. From June 23 until July 4 this year, its Executive Committee has come together in an hour of unparalleled economic crisis all over the world to take counsel together and to seek vision and strength from God in order to carry forward with greater efficiency and increased power the world mission of Christianity to all races at this time of need.

What, then, in detail is the Committee trying to do? Through these ten days its members are sharing the main concerns and burdens common to the forces of Christianity across the world. Their first task is to ask what is God's will for the future of His missionary work in the face of this present crisis. Are we not at the death of an era and the beginning of a new epoch? So they seek to get deeper still into the fulness of the Christian Message for the present age. They are reviewing, in the troubled waters of the Far East, those wonderful sustained

evangelistic movements in Japan and in China which reveal the steadfastness and courage and faith of the new Christian Churches there in a time of chaos amid the crushing forces of materialism and Communism. They share the agonizing conflict of loyalties in the hearts of members of the Indian Church under the stress of nationalistic hopes and fears. They rejoice together in the news of the movement of high-caste Hindus into the Christian Church, influenced by the beautiful witness of the purified lives of former outcasts; a movement that presents to the world a new miracle of the Eternal Gospel.

What titanic issues emerge when the Committee faces the proclamation of the Gospel, in the midst of the aggressive industrialism that is swiftly corroding and destroying the structure of the African tribal society? What, again, is the duty of Christians in face of the sixteen millions of Jews spread across all lands, now for the first time in thirteen centuries hurled out from the protection as well as the persecution of the Ghetto into the swirling tides of mechanistic materialism and social revolution?

What, the Committee ask, is the Christian attitude to be with regard to missionary and religious freedom. This problem faced St. Paul and all the Christians in the days when they were commanded to worship the Roman Emperor. It faces us today but in new and strangely difficult forms all across the world. Again, in an era of hunger for education all over the world, the Committee is asking how the Christian forces can provide for their own people as well as others an education essentially and constructively Christian and a finer and more fascinating literature.

These are some of the problems that face every missionary society in the world. No one society can possibly grapple with them, for they need the pooling of the wisdom, experience, leadership and influence of all in the light of God's leading. It is to secure the strength that comes from corporate planning and action in the face of mountainous difficulties and glorious opportunities that these leaders of the Christian forces have come together in Herrnhut. What they do and decide will be reported in a further article at the end of their deliberations.

Why then have they chosen Herrnhut for their deliberations? The reason became vividly real to us on the very first evening. We walked together into the lovely old church in which two hundred years ago Count Zinzendorf spoke to those first missionaries of the Union of Brethren, at the beginning of the most marvelous missionary story that can be recorded of any Christian church throughout the ages.

The little town was created ten years earlier in 1722, by fugitives from what is now Czecho-Slovakia, who fled from persecution and found refuge on the estate of Count Zinzendorf. John Wesley came in 1738, a few weeks after his conversion in a Moravian meeting in London, and found here the inspiration and many of the principles of organization that developed when he went back to England and started that evangelical movement which affected British history and has modified the world's life, spreading to North America and reaching out to every race on earth.

Dr. Mott, speaking from the spot where Zinzendorf had stood, said that he by analysis had found that on the average one in sixty of the Moravian brethren and sisters have gone to the mission field, while the proportion in the Protestant churches of the West is less than one in five thousand. In that church as Dr. Mott spoke, the great congregations - with the sisters on the one side and the

brethren on the other - included more than half of the population of the town. So they shared the worship and vision of the International Missionary Council's Committee, and contributed to it their contagious spirit.

Bishop Baudert welcomed us there in the name of his people. We were welcomed too by the leaders of the German missionary forces. It was deeply moving that in one of the most anxious crises in German history her people should turn to the concerns of God's world salvation and welcome these men and women of other lands, who are giving their lives to the advance of His Kingdom.

There was something specially stirring in the light of lovingkindness beaming in the faces of these our hosts and in the sight of the hundreds of women and girls wearing their caps of spotless white. These caps are in many cases handed down from generation to generation even from their great-grandmothers - caps in which the little girls wear bright red ribbons, the maidens of eighteen and upwards wear a pink ribbon, the married women blue and the widows a white one.

Dr. Mott, after revealing in moving sentences the debt which he himself owes to Moravian guidance and inspiration from the beginning of his life-service, sounded the dominating note of the meeting. It is, first, to listen amid the earthquake of crisis and the tempest of conflicting forces, for the still small Voice of the Living God; and, secondly, to make fresh dedication of latent capacities not already called forth, in obedience to what He says to us.

Every inch of building around that central square of Herrnhut and the low fronted houses of its quite stone-paved streets, the lovely graveyard on the hill above the town, the charming simple thoughtful Christian hospitality of our hosts and hostesses - all conspire to create an atmosphere of steadfast radiant Christian living that makes a quite incalculable gift to the spirit and to the thought and prayer of the delegates.

At the outset of the Committee meetings, Mr. Kenneth Maclellan, Secretary of the Conference of British Missionary Societies, very strikingly showed how during the post-war years, when income has been on the whole stationary, the work in the field has gone ahead in multiplying prosperity. Has not, he asked, God called us to discover through the very stringency of the present economic crisis that one era of His missionary work has closed and another opened? Are we not called to face the fact of the self-witnessing Church in all mission lands? Our contribution in the fields of the world today must be something different from that of organization and direction. What is it to be? Are we now ready to cooperate both in helping these Churches abroad to their advance and in revealing to the sending Churches at home the wonders of God's work abroad?

The Rev. W. Wilson Cash of the Church Missionary Society called the Committee to turn from balancing budgets and concern with buildings and schemes and great policies. Looking on the growth of the whole Church through the world, he outlined the wonderful spiritual movements going on in India, in East and West Africa and in the Near and Far East. That work, he claimed is not conditioned by economics. We are here to rediscover just what Christ can mean today in our individual souls and in that transforming world.

One after another of the leaders shared the concerns and burdens of many lands. They ranged from Dr. Schlunk, leader of the German delegation, to Mr. Kim of Korea, Mr. Sobrapena of the Philippine Islands, Mr. Philip of the National

Christian Council of India, Mrs. Hofmeyr of South Africa, Mr. Ebizawa of Japan, Dr. Wilder, Secretary of the Near East Christian Council with its headquarters in Egypt, Professor Zwemer of Princeton University and indeed of the whole Moslem world, Mr. Meyer of Norway, and many others.

Out of that sharing of common concerns came a wondering sense of how God is today leading men and women of varied racial, ecclesiastical, political and cultural backgrounds through the same testing school of discipline and opportunity. He is leading them, too, toward unspeakably boundless opportunity, in a day when every nation on earth sees the political, industrial, and economic foundations of its old life collapsing visibly, and is beginning to discover that after all there is one eternal Foundation-Stone on which men can build.

(A second article giving an account of the deliberations of the International Missionary Council will be sent to you in about ten days or two weeks.)

International Missionary Council
419 Fourth Avenue, New York City
Rev. A. L. Warnshuis, D.D., Secretary

For immediate release
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(This article is the second of two describing the meeting at Herrnhut, Saxony, of the Committee of the International Missionary Council from June 23 to July 4, 1932. The first article suggested (a) the background, (b) the representative personnel of the Committee and (c) how these led it straight into a corporate search for the will of God for Christians in the world of today and to an opening of their life to His grace. As such it has the inevitable shortcomings of a swift attempt to concentrate into short and popular form both a record of the work and experience of the conference and an interpretation of its significance.)

THE MISSION OF CHRISTIANITY IN A WORLD CRISIS

From Jerusalem to Herrnhut - and Beyond

The setting of the conference in this Moravian community at Herrnhut, with its marvellous history, enriched both the inner spiritual life and the discussion of world problems. It was the English historian, Lecky, who said that what happened to John Wesley in the little Moravian meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, meant more to England than all the victories of Pitt by land and sea. As the Rev. W. W. Cash of the Church Missionary Society, England, showed, the missionary movement sprang from the evangelical revival which came out of the Moravian movement. This revival in turn expressed itself, not only in personal conversion, but in social action - the abolition of the slave-trade and legislation for industrial reform. This same transforming power must change us, and by its contagion spread its wonder-working influence throughout the world.

In the devotional meetings at nine o'clock each morning, led by men of different nations, races and communions, we were repeatedly recalled to the parallelism between the I.M.C. opening its heart and soul to the working of the Spirit in face of the world task of Christianity and the Moravians sending out the first missionaries from that very room in 1732, as well as the visit of John Wesley and his return to combat the vice and spiritual torpor of his native land. Again and again in the morning, the Holy Communion was celebrated by the Bishop of Salisbury, in which at his invitation the members of the Committee from all over the world shared, in the very room where John Wesley went down on his knees in prayer. (Two letters written by Wesley to Count Zinzendorf and another of the brethren on his return to England, the originals of which are in the archives at Herrnhut, were read at one of these devotional services.)

At no time did the radiant community-spirit of the Unity of the Brethren sweep across the spirits of the delegates with greater force than at the united love-feast, at which with the delegates there were present the Moravian community of the little town. Their strong sweet choral singing of powerful spiritual songs expressed the enduring moral and spiritual fiber of a people who have triumphed over persecution without bitterness, and have even faced peace and relative prosperity without degeneration.

The Hon. Newton Rowell, who represented Canada at the first Assembly of the League of Nations, is President of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, and, as Vice-Chairman of the Institute of Pacific Relations, has recently made a direct and intimate study of Far Eastern problems in the East, brought to the Council a considered judgment that presented to it, as to Christians everywhere, a stirring challenge. Having shown how Eastern civilizations are being undermined by growing racial consciousness and antipathies in the Far East (for which the West is in no small sense responsible), the growing sense of nationalism, the intensive economic and industrial development, and the growing secular materialistic and scientific attitude to life, Mr. Rowell described the remedial agencies such as the League of Nations, the International Labor Office at Geneva, the Permanent Court of International Justice, the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact and the sanctions surrounding it. He then uttered these solemnizing words: "All these tend to improve the situation, but if we have only these I see no hope for a solution. Unless we can so present the way of Christ in word and in life that men shall choose to follow Him, communism will rule." The only organization outside the Roman Catholic Church that surveys the field as a whole (a fundamental thing in dealing with the world situation) is, he concluded, the International Missionary Council, and without the cooperation and unity for which that Council stands, the Church now divided and competing is inadequate.

So Mr. Rowell pleaded with the Council to attempt a restatement of the Christian Message applied to the life of today and to lead in so consistent and unmistakable a proclamation of the Christian Message in word and life that it shall inspire the zeal and enthusiasm that the communist displays without his hatred.

Day after day the Committee of the International Missionary Council worked at this task. It surveyed on the one hand definite projects of cooperation and work to be done in each of the continents concerned. It was greatly stirred on hearing from representative leaders from all these lands of astonishing aggressive work that is, with increasing momentum and power being carried on by the Christian Church, whether in the East or Africa. Under the terrible economic stress of today's world crisis, and in face of self-confident materialism and positive messianic communism, the Christian forces in Japan and Korea, in China and Siam, in India and in the Philippines, so far from beating a retreat are pressing forward in ways for which it is difficult to find a parallel in the history of modern missions. One of these adventures was the detailed programs and the specific activity of the Kingdom of God Movement in Japan; carried through with self-sacrifice, led by a sanctified organizational genius alongside a flaming evangelist; daring to carry Christ into slum, village and industrial city, both proclaiming the Gospel and transforming social conditions. No wonder the hearts of the delegates leapt in response to Dr. Mott's exclamation, "We are indeed in the presence of an apostolic age!"

The unique step taken by the whole Church in Britain, led by the two Archbishops and the official heads of all denominations, in inviting the whole Church in India to send an Indian Mission of Fellowship to Britain, aroused lively interest. These Indian leaders who come to Great Britain this autumn (1932) will not, for the most part, address great meetings; but in a series of selected areas in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, will share with groups of youth, of laymen and women, with clergy and ministers, India's experience of Christ. The Mission is in no sense an appeal for missionary service in India, but an offering by India of its own spiritual riches to the West. All the cost of the journey from India will be raised by Indian Christians themselves in their own land.

Again and again in single sentences a window was opened into dramatic new situations that startle and challenge. What a world of suffering and gallant courage is, for instance, revealed in the simple statement that forty-nine churches of Korean Christians have recently been closed in Siberia by the Soviet Government, many of the Koreans taking refuge in Manchuria, and that in response the Korean Church itself is carrying out a special evangelistic forward movement among those people in Manchuria.

Similar heroic advances in face of humanly impossible conditions of chaos and economic terror in China and in face of terrible distraction in Japan were reported. A stirring picture of the apostolic travels of a pastor touring the villages of Siam, and the wonderful work of a group largely of young folk bearing their witness, brought thrill and cheer from an unexpected quarter. In Siam the advance takes the form of what is called a Health Program, involving the growth of mental and spiritual as well as physical health through Christian work in the school, the church and the hospital on lines of sustained effort, sharing a common life and through personal work. From the Philippine Islands came a picture of a Youth movement based on the three principles of reaching youth through youth, of moral and social as well as spiritual uplift, and of the union of all the Churches, in face of the vast multitudes of youth detached by modern secular materialism from all Christian loyalties, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant.

The very radical proposals made by Commissions on Higher Education in India and in Japan, showed that a new day is bound to dawn in these fields. The proposal that in Japan some score of theological colleges which, striving with inadequate staff to give denominational training to pastors, should concentrate into two, where the best teaching strength of all these colleges would be pooled for the good of all, coupled with the project of a Union Christian University for Japan shows the radical character of the changes envisaged in face of the present world crisis. Nor are these changes mere paper proposals. Already in India definite concrete resolutions had been taken that will in a few brief years give a lead in removing the burning problem of how to build a new intellectually and spiritually qualified Asiatic leadership for the Churches in the East.

A visit made by expert teachers of church history from the West to the East in recent months, in order to help in framing a better curriculum of church history, in developing a sense of the need that the younger churches grasp the heritage of the past centuries of Christianity, and helping the young Churches to make accurate balanced records of their contemporary life for the guidance and inspiration of later generations.

The whole problem of cooperation between different Churches was carried dramatically to a deeper and more searching level by the Rev. W. J. Noble, of Britain, who declared that ultimately we are bound in practice in cooperation to find ourselves face to face with the tremendous questions of faith and order. Unless we are ready to go further, he declared, we have already gone too far. Is it not time to say that, representing the missionary forces facing heathendom, in searching words to the Churches in the home land, "It is your duty to come together for, divided, you make it more difficult to win the world for Christ. Variety in unity is in accord with the will of God. The real breach is made by exclusiveness."

The Bishop of Salisbury, in following, declared that in God's name we are bound to believe that His unity must ultimately include all His followers. When it comes it must include the Roman Catholic Church. In view of the disunion of the churches the International Missionary Council is helping toward union by confronting

world-problems in a world-way, and by bringing wonderful comfort to the younger churches in the field. It is not called itself to grapple with the problems of Faith and Order which belong to the Church. The International Missionary Council is fashioning reunion by cooperation, which is a necessary corollary to doctrinal discussion.

A strong plea was made by the Rev. W. Wilson Cash of the Church Missionary Society, Great Britain, for a joint meeting of leaders of the International Missionary Council and the Continuation Committee of the Conference on Faith and Order.

The different home boards as they face the absolute necessity of cutting work have come together to put all their plans on the table in face of one another and have begun the task of looking at the world field as a whole and retrenching in ways that will by concentration and cooperation actually strengthen institutions and give a new impetus to the expanding life of the Church.

Definite impatience led some vigorous voices to call for even greater speed in this work and above all that we cease to propagate our differences in the East. More than one voice was raised by Asiatic leaders of the Church, saying that if the divisions in the Churches in the home lands continue to hold back the younger Churches in the mission field from one another, then those younger Churches would with deep sorrow be forced to separate themselves from the West so that they might unite in face of their own national needs. One of the great influences, as Dr. Axling of Japan showed, in creating this sense of spiritual solidarity among the Churches of nations in the East, is aggressive evangelism undertaken in face of the pressure of materialism and communism.

A real sense of shame swept the Council in face of the pitiful inadequate provision of a really fascinating and enriching literature for the Christians of Africa and the East as well as of Latin America in the vernacular languages, and they resolved to put still greater effort into this highly multiplying means of education.

Mr. J. Merle Davis of Japan and America, and Dr. Iserland, Germany, expounded their work as colleagues in the new Department of Social and Industrial Research and Council in Geneva under the International Missionary Council. They triumphantly revealed that their research into social and industrial conditions created by western capital and civilization among the African and other primitive peoples is itself a handmaid of direct evangelism. It is essential to Christian men to discover and display in practice how to make civilization congruous with the Gospel of Christ. The Geneva Department is concentrating at present upon the unique situation created in the copper belt of the Belgian Congo and Northern Rhodesia by its intensive industrialization of the African. Their definite goal is to work out in concrete terms how the mining organizations, the Governments, and the missionary organizations can cooperate and integrate their forces in order to create a new Christian African community, in place of the present disastrous corrosion of the old tribal system which leaves the individual African an isolated atom.

No contribution of the International Missionary Council has opened a way that promises a richer harvest than carrying the idea of the "reconstruction unit" among the rural churches of Asia. This plan groups villages together for evangelistic, educational and many welfare activities. Under the leadership of Dr. Butterfield, in a country like India, where three-quarters of the Christian population live in villages, it is developing, wherever it has been adopted, the spirit of self-reliance and sturdiness, a diminution of the economic slavery of money lenders and a total growth of the community in its moral and physical as well as spiritual life. The chorus of praise of this plan, and the pleas for its ex-

tension to other areas might have been monotonous, if they had not been so stirring and encouraging. We saw how a simple idea related in practical fashion to the ordinary daily life of peasant people can inspire and strengthen them, lift them out of lethargic inanition into radiant hope and solid advance. We here face unlimited possibilities, for an overwhelming preponderance of the human race is in its peasant communities. Anything that leads them towards a balanced life of spiritual, moral and physical contented progress will lift them out of ancient ruts and make them immune from the poisons of materialism.

Alarming developments in the restriction of religious freedom reported from Turkey, Persia, Eretreia, the Congo, China and Russia reveal that the battle for religious liberty needs to be fought again. The work of the Council's officers and proposed further activity in relationship with Governments in face of some of these situations were approved. The refusal by the Soviet authorities to allow any religious worker even to pass through Russia is one among many examples of the obstacles placed by some governments in the path of Christian missions. Common counsel again revealed here that different nations and missionary agencies in widely separated areas are suffering restrictions that are largely common in character and can best be met by concerted action.

A perfect Niagara of witness poured forth as to the values of a multitude of different practical lines of spiritual education of the sending Churches for the world mission of Christianity. Never in our experience have so many suggestive statements been made, pooling the varied experiments of churches in every continent to arouse a compelling sense of the centrality of the missionary enterprise in the life and witness of the Church. A whole booklet crammed with stimulus and suggestion could be written on that session alone. Mr. Philip of India showed how the wheel is now coming full circle so that the sending Churches are beginning to be also receiving Churches.

Dr. Koechlin of Bale, as chairman of the Committee on the sending Churches, in summing up showed how the discussion proved once more that man's difficulties are God's opportunities. "Out of our anxieties", he said, "we are searching for revival of the power of God and for possession of His divine gift." He emphasized strongly how, in thinking through clearly the fundamental issues, Dr. J. H. Oldham's work in associating together men of intellectual and spiritual leadership was making a rich contribution. They are searching out the meaning of the world of God and the word of God in the face of modern conditions and the trends of thought in science, and in getting clear insight into the meaning of God's purpose for us today. This is the work of the Church but the I.M.C. through its contact with its whole world field has its own distinctive approach to these questions and its contribution to make to their solution.

The sheer intellectual grasp of the principles and projects, the plans and actual inner life of the world mission of Christianity today is being strengthened by coordination of studies made by Professor K. S. Latourette of Yale University, U.S.A. This process is to be carried forward under his leadership in an honorary capacity as chairman of a new international research group aided by the headquarters staff.

Never in a considerable experience of international conferences has the writer been through discussions that have obeyed more thoroughly both aspects of the commandment "Speak the truth in love". Absolute frankness in expressing views often profoundly different has created a rich fellowship never marred from start to finish by any shadow of ill-feeling.

Realizing the colossal power of the inertia caused largely by the divided state of Christendom, the delegates, moved by the tragic world situation of today call missionary workers throughout the world to enter boldly a new era of cooperation. In that new period the requirements, principles and spirit of such cooperation must be more thorough, serious and sacrificial than ever. The officers of the Council are to give a major part of their effort to furthering in an advisory way constructive advances in cooperation such as may turn the retreat threatened by economic stringency into triumphant advance. The Committee were deeply stirred by a recollection of the wonderful fact that in the midst of conflict in the Far East, the chosen representatives of Christian organizations in Japan and China maintained spiritual fellowship and worked to promote peace and understanding and make the spirit of Christ more potent in international relationships.

In its closing hours the conference came to express with deep emotion its sense of the unparalleled universal need of men expressed in the tragedy, confusion and distress, physical as well as spiritual and intellectual throughout the world. Men, women and youth everywhere (they held) are weary of war; they decry racial hatred and communal strife and rebel against the exploitation of the masses for private gain. The traditional foundations of their thought and life are disintegrated. It saw in all this a quickening call to Christians in all lands, of all races and communions to repentance and to carry to a world in which all men's own powers have miserably failed, the Good News of God's revelation and redemption in Jesus Christ. This is the sole foundation for an order of society according to His will, a Gospel redeeming and transforming the individual and working in uncompromising protest against all that is unchristian in modern thought and life. Christ must be so presented to men that they face the necessity of real decision, a complete surrender to God as a total act of the whole moral being, issuing in new relations of love to men, in war upon the evils of society and in the redressing of wrongs.